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EXPERIENCES OF SPIRITUAL VISITATION AND IMPREGNATION: POTENTIAL INDUCTION BY FREQUENCY-MODULATED TRANSIENTS FROM AN ADJACENT CLOCK[1]

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Summary.—A left-handed Roman Catholic female adolescent with a history of early brain trauma reported nightly visitations by a sentient being. During one episode she experienced vibrations of the bed, an external presence along the left side that moved into her body, inner vaginal (not clitoral) and uterine sensations, and the sense of being impregnated by a force she attributed to the Holy Spirit. After the latter experience she felt an invisible baby superimposed upon her left shoulder. Analyses of the measurements for magnetic anomalies within her bedroom indicated an electric clock about 20 cm from her head while she slept. The complex form of the 4 microT magnetic pulses generated by the clock was similar to shapes that evoke electrical seizures in epileptic rats and sensitive humans.

We (Persinger, Tiller, & Koren, 2000) have reported that application of weak (1 microT), complex frequency-modulated magnetic fields over the right hemisphere enhanced the experience of a sensed presence. The experience of a sentient being is more likely in individuals with histories of elevated complex partial epileptic-like signs and can be robustly evoked in about 50% of the normal men and women if they are exposed to these fields for only 20 min. within a darkened, quiet room. The present case history indicated that household objects due to innovative circuitry to convert 60 Hz power, like some electric clocks, may be able to generate similar magnetic fields and evoke these effects in sensitive individuals.

In the present case, the 17-yr.-old, left-handed, adopted daughter of a professional couple reported an apparition walking down the hallway (left visual field) at about 0230 hr., footsteps and humming, and a sensed presence at the foot of her bed intermittently for about three weeks. During one episode she experienced intense deep vaginal sensations and "movement" within her uterus. She felt as if she had been impregnated by the Holy Spirit and felt as if she had an invisible small child superimposed upon her left shoulder.

Before the experiences began during the fall of 1996 in Sudbury, Ontario, she was considered normal but mildly hypomanic and creative. As a young child she had sustained a mechanical trauma over her left prefrontal region. The paresis of the right side of her body was subtle but present. She

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also had a history of intermittent episodes of nocturnal akinesia, multiple vivid dreams (with a strong vestibular component), and odd sensations over the left neck. Her score for the complex partial epileptic cluster from the Personal Philosophy Inventory (Persinger & Makarec, 1993) was more than two standard deviations above the mean.

Except for Roman Catholic crosses on a wall in most rooms, there were no conspicuous contextual stimuli in the house. The intensity of 60-Hz magnetic fields within the house, below her bedroom in the crawl space, and in the adjacent region were within 0.1 microT to 0.3 microT. Twenty-four-hour monitoring with 10-sec. bin times identified occasional spikes (1 microT) associated with activation of the heating systems and the refrigerator. However, we discovered that the young woman slept with an electric clock approximately 20 cm from her head. The magnetic field from this source was measured by a microcassette recorder with a standard telephone magnetic coupling as the sensor. The complex wave was digitized using a 16-bit sound card on a 486/66-MHz computer.

The most conspicuous signal exhibited an intensity between 1 to 4 microT near her head; the magnitude through her right hemisphere changed as a function of her variable distance from the clock while she slept. The pulse pattern was characterized by a downward (negative polarity) displacement followed by a positive peak and then a slower displacement. The rise times were variable around 200 microsec. Each complex spike was separated by 16.5 msec. The pulse pattern was remarkably similar to the Thomas pulse (Persinger, *et al.*, 2000) that has been shown to evoke electrical seizures. Although the phenomena ceased within a few days after the removal of the clock, the procedure was confounded by conventional psychiatric treatments.

From our perspective the specific experiences of inner vaginal and uterine sensations, the feeling of a small (baby) homunculus over the left side, and, the sensed presence that merged into her body would be consistent with spreading electrical discharges within a sensitized medial temporal lobe of the right hemisphere into the adjacent insula. The likely suppression of nocturnal melatonin by the specific shape of the magnetic field generated by the clock facilitated electrical seizures she experienced as "vibrations of the bed." The attributions of the experiences to the Holy Spirit would have stemmed from her religious beliefs.

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